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P3
P. 101
1.5 b, d

ENVELOPE

CDSN = CFS921 MCN = 97010/31839 TOR = 970102256
PTTCZYUW RUEKJCS6003 0110027-CCCC--RUEALGX.
ZNY CCCCC

EXCISE

HEADER

P 110027Z JAN 97
FM DIA WASHINGTON DC
INFO RUEADWD/OCSA WASHINGTON DC
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC
RUEACMC/CMC WASHINGTON DC
RHHJMCY/JICPAC HONOLULU HI
RHHMUNA/USCINPAC HONOLULU HI//J2CD/J33/J5//
RUANJTF/DIRJIATF EAST
RUCBAIC/LANTCOM IDHS NORFOLK VA
RUWGTCH/JIATF WEST//J20//
RUEANTX/CJTTF SIX
RHLBAAA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUDMQAN/MARCORINTACT DET QUANTICO VA
RUDMGRD/COGARD INTELCOORDCEN WASHINGTON DC
RUDHSIC/CDRUSASOIC WASHINGTON DC//DI//
RUEALGX/SAFE

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
() Release (X) Excise () Deny () Declassify
Date 1/7/03 Exemption b4, 1.5 b, d

P 102238Z JAN 97
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3961
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
INFO RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHOND/DIRONDCP WASHDC
RHLBAAA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC 1139
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2928
RUEABND/DEA WASHDC
RULSADT/NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//
RUETIAA/DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD
RUCNFB/FBI WASHDC
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC
BT

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
() Classify as (X) Extend as () Downgrade to
Date 1/7/03 Declassify on 1/10/07 Reason 1.5 d

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CONTROLS

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 000274
STATE FOR DRL, ARA/AND, INL, L/LEI
NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS
ONDCP FOR BILL BOZIN
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
DEA FOR OF, OFL, OC, AX
JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET
FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRU2
USIA FOR AR, I/GAR
TREASURY FOR FINCEN
E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/01
/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

TAGS: PHUM, PREL, PGOV, SNAR, PINR, KJUS, KCRM, CO
SUBJECT: RETIRED ARMY COLONEL LAMBASTES MILITARY FOR INACTION
AGAINST PARAMILITARIES
REF:

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY POL/ECONOFF SUSAN ABEYTA. REASON 1.5(D).

SUMMARY

2. (U) RETIRED ARMY COLONEL CARLOS ALFONSO VELASQUEZ, PUBLICLY DENOUNCED THE ARMY JANUARY 9 FOR FAILING TO COMBAT PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN **URABA**. KNOWN AND ADMIRER AS FORMER COMMANDER OF THE ARMY COMPONENT OF THE SPECIAL ANTI-NARCOTICS TASK FORCE IN CALI (BLOQUE DE BUSQUEDA), VELAZQUEZ IS CREDITED WITH UNCOVERING INFORMATION THAT FORMED THE BASIS FOR CASO 8,000. VELAZQUEZ CLAIMS THAT HE WAS FORCED INTO RETIREMENT BECAUSE OF A HIGHLY CRITICAL REPORT HE DRAFTED CHARGING THE ARMY WITH INACTION AND NEGLIGENCE IN THE FACE OF GROWING PARAMILITARISM IN **URABA**, WHERE HE WAS DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE 17TH BRIGADE. END SUMMARY.

HIGHLY RESPECTED COLONEL PUBLICLY CALLS ARMY TO ACCOUNT

3. (U) RETIRED ARMY COLONEL CARLOS ALFONSO VELASQUEZ WENT ON NATIONAL TV JANUARY 9 TO BLAST THE ARMY FOR ITS WILLFUL FAILURE TO COMBAT PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN COLOMBIA. LOCAL DAILIES GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO VELASQUEZ STATEMENTS JANUARY 10, BUT VELASQUEZ HAD EVIDENTLY BEEN PREPARING TO GO PUBLIC FOR SOME TIME. AN EXTENSIVE INTERVIEW WITH VELASQUEZ APPEARED IN THE JANUARY 15-FEBRUARY 15 ISSUE OF "ALTERNATIVA" AS WELL. VELASQUEZ

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WAS DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE 17TH BRIGADE IN **URABA** FROM JUNE 1995 UNTIL THE FALL OF 1996. ON MAY 31, 1996, VELASQUEZ SUBMITTED AN INTERNAL REPORT TO THE GENERAL STAFF, CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF THE 17TH BRIGADE FOR FAILURE OF THE BRIGADE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN **URABA**. THE REPORT WAS CRITICAL OF THE 17TH BRIGADE COMMANDER GENERAL **RITO ALEJO DEL RIO** WHO, VELASQUEZ CHARGED, WAS NOT ENGAGED IN FIGHTING PARAMILITARIES AND WHO TOOK SPECIAL MEASURES TO KEEP VELASQUEZ OUT OF THE LOOP WITH REGARD TO KEY BRIGADE ACTIONS. VELASQUEZ SAID HE ALSO WROTE TO GENERAL BEDOYA, THE ARMY COMMANDER AND LATER MET WITH HIM. BEDOYA WAS NOT SYMPATHETIC, SAID VELASQUEZ. A RESULT, AN INVESTIGATION AGAINST VELASQUEZ HIMSELF WAS LAUNCHED, AS HE TOLD THE PRESS, FOR "INSUBORDINATION AND DISLOYALTY." ON AUGUST 23, THE ARMY GENERAL ASSIGNED TO INVESTIGATE THE CASE ISSUED A RESOLUTION OF "REPRENSION SEVERA" OR SEVERE REPRIMAND AGAINST VELASQUEZ FOR "INSUBORDINATION, BREACH OF SERVICE AND COMRADESHIP." VELASQUEZ' EFFORTS TO AKK! AT AN INTERNATIONAL NGO GIVE SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO MONSIGNOR DUARTE CANCINO AND MAYOR GLORIA CUARTAS OF APARTADO FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN FAVOR OF PEACE.

4. (U) VELASQUEZ TOLD BOGOTA DAILY "EL TIEMPO" THAT THE ARMY IS NOT CONVINCED THAT PARAMILITARY ELEMENTS CONSTITUTE A DANGEROUS FACTOR IN THE PUBLIC DISORDER AND VIOLENCE IN **URABA**. HE FURTHER CHARACTERIZED ELEMENTS IN THE ARMY AS BEING EXTREMELY RADICALIZED TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY CONCEIVE THE GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS AS PERSONAL ENEMIES RATHER THAN AS ENEMIES OF SOCIETY. FOR HIS PART, VELASQUEZ SAID THE ARMY SHOULD COMBAT EVERY FACTOR THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE VIOLENCE AFFECTING COLOMBIAN SOCIETY. VELASQUEZ WARNED THAT THE TENDENCY TO IGNORE THE PRESENCE OF PARAMILITARIES COULD LEAD IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO A SITUATION ANALAGOUS TO WHAT HE CALLED COLOMBIA'S FORMER "COHABITATION" WITH NARCOTRAFFICKERS. HE TOLD "ALTERNATIVA" THAT THERE WAS NO OBJECTIVE AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION OF HIS ALLEGATIONS, EXPLAINING, "THE ARMY IS SUCH A HIERARCHICAL INSTITUTION THAT /***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 *****/ THERE STILL EXISTS THE PRINCIPLE THAT ONE'S SUPERIOR IS RIGHT ABOVE ALL ELSE, AND FOR THAT REASON THEY GIVE MORE CREDENCE TO THE BRIGADE COMMANDER'S STATEMENT." VELASQUEZ STATED FURTHER THAT ARMY COMMANDER BEDOYA HAD REPROACHED HIM FOR SUBMITTING HIS REPORT WITHOUT "INCONTROVERTIBLE EVIDENCE," TO WHICH HE COUNTERED THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT WAS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE

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INFORMATION HE PROVIDED WAS SUFFICIENT TO LAUNCH AN INVESTIGATION THAT WOULD PRODUCE HARD EVIDENCE.

AN ADMIRED AND MUCH-DECORATED OFFICER

5. (U) VELASQUEZ WAS BEST KNOWN AS THE COMMANDER OF ARMY COMPONENT OF THE SPECIAL ANTI-NARCOTICS JOINT COMMAND OR TASK FORCE ("BLOQUE DE BUSQUEDA") IN CALI. HE COMMANDED THE UNIT WHEN IT CONDUCTED RAIDS ON THE OFFICE OF THE CALI CARTEL'S FORMER ACCOUNTANT, GUILLERMO PALOMARI, WHOSE RECORDS REVEALED THE PENETRATION OF NARCODONATIONS IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AND FORMED THE BASIS OF CASO 8,000. HE GARNERED ADDITIONAL RESPECT AMONG THE COLOMBIAN PUBLIC WHEN HE STOOD UP TO A BLACKMAIL ATTEMPT BY THE CARTEL BY GOING PUBLIC ABOUT AN EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIR.

COMMENT

6. (C) [REDACTED] EMBOFFS WHO KNOW VELASQUEZ SPEAK HIGHLY OF HIS+I RIZED

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